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REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 20 OCTOBER 2009

SUBJECT: ALLOTMENTS

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report will identify existing demand for allotments in Moray, identify possible Council owned sites suitable for allotments and propose that a draft allotments policy is approved for consultation.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A59 of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the formulation and review of Council wide policy, strategies, priorities and objectives in standards and levels of service.

RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee;

- (a) note the current demand for allotments
- (b) instruct officers to carry out further investigations into the suitability and status of sites identified and to bring the results of that investigation back to a future Policy and Resources Committee
- (c) to allocate a budget for the costs of carrying out contaminated land studies
- (d) approve the draft policy and lease template for consultation and instruct officers to bring the results of this consultation back to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Policy and Resources Committee held on 2 June 2009 it was agreed to authorise a lead officer, to be identified by the Chief Executive in consultation with Corporate Management Team, to proceed with Options 2 and 3 as detailed in the report presented to the meeting and report back to this committee on progress.

- 3.2 Option 2 in the report was to identify areas of Council owned land to lease to community groups who would then take over management of the site and Option 3 was to consider acquiring land through purchase or lease where insufficient council owned land is available.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive with the Corporate Management Team identified the lead officer as the Community Planning and Development Manager.
- 3.4 The Moray Allotment Forum has been established. This is an umbrella group of local people developing interest allotments projects from Elgin, Keith, Forres, Fochabers, Dufftown and Cullen.
- 3.5 Current interest is listed in **Appendix 1**. Demand is dependant on a number of factors. Forres estimate that they could increase their waiting list substantially if more land became available. The other potential groups are holding back on promoting themselves but if land becomes available it is anticipated that demand will increase.
- 3.6 A list of council owned sites which could be developed for allotments (**see Appendix 2**) have been identified by Estates.
- 3.7 Further investigation is required to confirm the status of the identified pieces of land and to ensure that they are suitable for allotments. Further discussion with Planning and Development highlighted that a contaminated land investigation is required on the Elgin and Keith sites. There are implications on the capital programme (provision of car parking) and potential implications on capital receipts from disposal of land, discussion will need to take place with the Asset Management Group. There is no budget allocated currently and it is recommended that a budget is allocated to support fund the phase 1 studies.
- 3.8 Further investigation needs to be carried out across Moray to identify further land suitable. The newly formed Moray Allotments Forum is also looking to privately owned sites.
- 3.9 A draft policy has been produced (**see Appendix 4**) that would provide the basis for the development and support of allotments in Moray. The policy, if approved for consultation, will be distributed to key stakeholders and the results of the consultation reported to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan**  
The provision of allotments will contribute to the Council and its partners a number of SOA objectives. This report is in accordance with the objectives of the Environmental Programme of the Corporate Development Plan.
- (b) **Policy and Legal**  
The council's powers and duties are set out in **Appendix 3** to this report.
- (c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

Further evaluation of the land identified will be required to clarify the full financial implications. There are potential savings in ground and tree maintenance on site. There is potential revenue generation on these sites.

There are specific issues that will affect the disposal of any land that is listed as "Common Good" and the status of these sites needs to be confirmed.

A contaminated land desktop investigation report costs £1,112 and for project management of a phase 2 investigation £2650 each. As phase 2 investigations would involve tendering for and appointing a consultant this is anticipated to cost around £5,000. Any site which has concerns raised by the screening is likely to be too expensive to consider further. Two of the sites identified require a phase 1 investigation with a total cost of £2,114. There is no current budget to fund this.

**(d) Consultations**

Head of Financial Services, Legal Services, Estates, Planning, Roads, Contaminated Land Section and Environmental Services have been consulted on the policy and consideration has been given to their comments in both the paper and the draft Policy.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 That the committee notes growing demand for allotments in Moray, agrees that the draft policy be put out for consultation and that officers are instructed to progress investigations into the sites identified including contaminated land phase 1 studies where required.**

**Author of Report: John Ferguson, Community Planning & Development Manager**

**Background Papers:**

**Signature** Margaret Wilson

**Date** 13th October 2009

**pp. Designation** Chief Executive

**Name** Alastair Keddie